



To: Town of Barrington Selectboard

From: Jessica Tennis, Recreation Director

The Recreation Department became aware of a grant opportunity through DHHS that focuses on Empowering NH Youth, with 3.5 million dollars in federal funding available. Due to the timing between discovering the grant and the application deadline of Monday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, the Town Administrator and Recreation Director agreed that it was best to apply for the grant rather than miss the opportunity. Below is an overview of how we plan to utilize these funds, if chosen as a recipient. Within this grant application, we have proposed to start a Teen Exploration Adventure & Mentoring program, or T.E.A.M program that engages youths, ages 12-17, in programming that develops leadership, responsibility, collaboration, and self-confidence while positively giving back to our community. We have asked for total of \$160,000 which would cover the cost of a 15-passenger van, associated costs, and overhead costs.

Over the past few years of the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen a declined participation in our teen community members. We have also seen a decline in our teen staff members. With the changes we've seen due to the pandemic paired with advancements in technology parents have establish alternative routines, allowing their teens staying home alone for extended periods of time. The extra time teens are spending alone has led to increased screen time and mental health concerns. In the era of social media, teens constantly compare themselves to others and feel more alone and withdrawn than in previous generations. Our goal with the T.E.A.M program is to foster an environment where teens can learn, develop, and grow into strong community members through connection, engagement, and friendship.

Providing this opportunity is important to our department as the teen demographic plays an intricate roll within our community. We often hire teens that have attended and volunteered within our programs, which adds a tremendous amount of value to their first job experience. This opportunity provides them with the foundation needed to understand and implement training tools, because they know firsthand what it's like to be in the shoes of a camper. We currently employ a number of teens through our before/after care programs, camps, and community events that we hope to engage in this T.E.A.M program to promote continued growth.

The T.E.A.M program is intended to offer a variety of opportunities for our teen demographic through leadership retreats, service trips, and recreational adventures. These experiences will improve their quality of life, leadership skills, and benevolence while focusing on improving our local community.

I will continue to communicate updates on the status of our application but wanted to ensure everyone was aware of our submission prior to recipients being finalized. At this time, they anticipate recipients being announced by May 25<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you for your support with this opportunity,

Sincerely,

Jessica Tennis

Recreation Director

Town of Barrington